

The "All's" of Prayer (Ephesians 6:18)

I've listened to a lot of messages in the past eight years. And when I listen I have a habit of picking up on the word or phrases that preachers lean on when preaching. I was at a funeral recently and I counted a preacher saying the same phrase 128 times in one 25 min sermon. I knew a preacher friend down at the jail that could barely end a sentence w/o saying "Can I hear you say amen?" I've even found my own verbal crutches. I try to keep my self from them, but there have been messages where I have said the phrase "the truth of the matter is..." Or even more so I will use the word "Listen" over and over again! I've tried not to do it, but it's a hard habit to break.

In the text before us, it appears that the Apostle Paul is pretty attached to the word "all." In one form or another, he used it four times in this one verse. In the section that precedes our key text, where a detailed description is given of the Christian's armor, the word "all" only appears one time (see 6:16). But when it comes to the importance of the ministry of prayer in spiritual warfare, the word is repeated and reemphasized. All the more reason for every believe to sit up straight and heed the "All's" of Prayer.

Prayer should be offered at the "all" of Situations! - We are

confronted immediately with the admonition, "Praying always." Certainly, the Apostle is not suggesting that we kneel and make verbal petitions twenty-four hours a day. Jesus said in Matthew

6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Rather, like Christ's command to His disciples in the Garden, watch and pray" 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing. W. Wiersby said "Keep the reciever off the hook." Always means "on every occasion" or "at all seasons." The words "Praying always" speak of a constant attitude of prayer. No matter what the time or location, the silent utterances of our hearts can ascend to the blessed throne of grace.

Prayer should be offered under the "all" of the Spirit! The next phrase, "with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," underlines this truth. We are to pray to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Our prayers are nothing more than religious rhetoric apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But when we pray, as Jude explains, "in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 1:20), in cooperation with and in the energy of the Spirit of God, our prayers are not just words. They are mighty, persuasive, effectual petitions before God. In the Tabernacle of the Old Testament, there was the alter of incense which was a

picture of prayer. The incense was mixed as prescribed by God and placed on the alter. But it was only the fire of God that wafted the fragrance into the Most Holy Place! One author writes "It is possible to pray fervently in the flesh and never get through to God. It is also possible to pray quietly in the Spirit and see God's hand do great things.

Prayer should be offered by the "all" of Steadfastness! This all

encourages us be steadfast in our prayers. Perseverance = to give constant attention to; to stick to it and not quit. The apostle prods us to keep watch, to not be slumbering, but continuing in prayer. Not much of the church today knows what it meant to "have prayed through." It is because so few labor and strive in

prayer. **Acts 1:14** *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...* **Acts 2:42** *And they continued stedfastly in the*

apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. **Romans 12:12** *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;* Remember to story Jesus told in Luke

11 about the friend that comes at night and asks for bread for a traveler. **Luke 11:8** *I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.* It is that shameless

incessant knocking that moved the hand of the friend! We should

incessantly pray for our children; We should incessantly pray for our church; We should incessantly pray for our community; ; We

should incessantly pray for our **city**, ; We should incessantly pray for our **country**, ; We should incessantly pray for **converts**; We should incessantly pray for our **Christians**; We should incessantly pray for our **conformity to Christ**! In **Genesis 32**, Jacob wrestled till the breaking of day "Saying I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"

Prayer should be offered for the "all" of the Saints! That is indicated in the statement, "...and supplication for all saints." The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray starts out by saying "Our Father" not "My Father" Yes, the saints in **Ephesus** needed prayer, but so did the saints in **Rome**, in **Corinth**, in **Galatia**, in **Philippi**, in **Colossae**, in **Thessalonica**, and elsewhere. There is more to the family of God than just you. Even the Apostle Paul who had been to heaven and back asked folks to pray for him. If Paul need the prayer support of his brothers and sisters, then you and I need it all the more! Praying for others makes our world bigger. Even today, we can experience an enlargement of life and outreach through the ministry of prayer.

Closing I know Paul said all quite a bit, but these all's a very important and instructive. Do you leave the receive of prayer on the hook, are you seeking the mind of the Spirit in prayer, are you persevering in prayer, are you praying beyond the boundaries of your life?